

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-10

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R 051056Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1312

INFO CINCPAC

SECDEF WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

DOD/OSD/ISA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SIAGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

S E C R E T BANGKOK 3692

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SEATO, MARR, MPOL

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL TO SCHEDULE A SEATO MILITARY ADVISORS MEETING

1. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF SEATO HAS ADDRESSED A LETTER TO THE COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES INVITING THEIR VIEWS ON THE DESIRABILITY OF HOLDING A MILITARY ADVISORS MEETING ON AN AGREED DATE BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING THIS FALL.

2. THE EIGHTEENTH COUNCIL MEETING DECIDED THAT MILITARY ADVISORS SHOULD MEET ONCE A YEAR "AT A TIME AND VENUE TO BE DECIDED BY THEM, BUT SEPARATE FROM SEATO COUNCIL

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MEETINGS". THE ORGANIZATIONS TERMS OF REFERENCE WERE

SUBSEQUENTLY REVISED TO PROVIDE THAT "THE MILITARY ADVISORS' GROUP SHALL MEET AS DIRECTED BY THE COUNCIL OR WHENEVER THEY DEEM IT NECESSARY".

3. SINCE THE MILADS LAST MET DURING 1973, THE SECGEN SUGGESTS THAT THE EXPERIENCE DERIVED FROM THE TWO RECENT SEATO EXERCISES AND A THIRD TO COMMENCE LATE MARCH, PLUS THE SEMINAR ON VILLAGE DEFENSE AND DEVELOPMENT AND THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE MEETING MIGHT PROVIDE THE MILADS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER MATTERS OF COMMON INTEREST AND TO EXAMINE THE CONCEPT OF FUTURE SEATO EXERCISES. SUCH A MEETING LASTING ONLY A DAY OR TWO WOULD ALSO GIVE THOSE MILADS APPOINTED SINCE 1973 A CHANCE TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON SEATO MATTERS, THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FEELS.

4. FINALLY, THE SECGEN RECOGNIZES THAT A MEETING OF THE MILADS, AFTER SUCH A LONG INTERVAL, WOULD HAVE POLITICAL AND MILITARY IMPLICATIONS. HE THEREFORE WISHES THE COUNCIL OF REPS TO CONSIDER THIS SUBJECT BEFORE TAKING ANY FURTHER INITIATIVE.

5. WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS PROPOSAL BEFORE RESPONDING TO THE SECGEN. SUBJECT TO THE VIEWS OF CINCPAC, OUR PRELIMINARY VIEW IS NEGATIVE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS IS AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO CONVOKE A SEATO MILITARY ADVISORS MEETING. WE DOUBT THAT THE MAJORITY OF SEATO MEMBERS WOULD AGREE TO A MILAD MEETING BUT, EVEN IF THEY DID, IT WOULD ONLY SERVE TO SHARPEN THE DIVERGENT VIEWS OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND CONCERNING THE DIRECTION SEATO IS GOING. IT WOULD, UNDOUBTEDLY, BE INTERPRETED BY THEM AS CONNECTED WITH CAMBODIA OR THE CURRENT DRY SEASON SITUATION IN INDOCHINA. MOREOVER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE AN AGENDA BASED ON PARAGRAPH 3, ABOVE, WOULD PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR ANYTHING MORE THAN AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE MILADS TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES. THE FAILURE OF THE MEETING TO PRODUCE ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES IN SEASIA WOULD FURTHER UNDERMINE THE NOTION THAT SEATO COULD CONCEIVABLY ACT IN CONCERT AS A COHESIVE MILITARY FORCE. WE THEREFORE
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CONCLUDE THAT SCHEDULING A MILAD MEETING IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE RAISES MANY PROBLEMS AND SOLVES FEW OR NONE.

6. WE WILL CONSIDER OUR TACTICS IN RESPONDING TO THE SECGENS PROPOSAL ONCE WE KNOW WHETHER CINCPAC AND WASHINGTON AGENCIES SHARE THESE VIEWS. MEANWHILE, WE WILL PROBE THE VIEWS OF OTHER SEATO MEMBERS SEVERAL OF WHOM WE BELIEVE WILL BE IN ACCORD WITH OUR ASSESSMENT THAT THIS IS NOT AN

APPROPRIATE TIME TO CONVENE A MILAD MEETING.

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